

## Voicemail Etiquette

Voicemail has many benefits and advantages when used properly. To ensure that we are providing good customer service to both internal and external callers, we must prepare an appropriate voicemail greeting.

1. Be sure to identify yourself using your complete name and your department.

Record your own personal greeting.

• **Example:** "Hello, you have reached (name) of (department). I am sorry I missed your call. Please leave a detailed message and I will return your call as soon as I can. Thank you for calling."

2. Your regular greeting should be used for your normal working hours. If you will be out of the office, such as on vacation, sick leave or temporary assignment, change your greeting to let the callers know this.

• **Example:** "Hello, you have reached (name) of (department). I will be out of the office beginning today (date) and will return (date). Please leave a detailed message and I will return your call as soon as possible. Thank you for calling."

3. **Meridian Mail**, the City's voice messaging system, has a temporary message feature under greeting options (while in mailbox, press 8, 2, 3). This feature allows you to record a temporary message with an expiration date. Use this feature to record your out-of-office messages.

4. Assign an alternate contact if you will be out for more than two days and include that information in your greeting.

5. Upon your return, be sure to respond to

your messages. When responding to a message, do not assume the receiver knows exactly which voicemail message you are referring to. Introduce your response with an opener.

• **Example:** "Hi (state caller's name). I am (name) of (department) responding to your voice message regarding (subject)."

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*\*As a reminder, FLSA covered employees must be compensated for all time worked. Under the FLSA law, work may include typing letters, answering telephone calls, fixing equipment and returning City vehicles, all performed during non-working hours. These duties, performed outside of normal working hours, are considered time worked, and employees must be compensated for them.*

*Under the FLSA, it is the obligation of the employer to keep accurate records of an employee's work. If the employees are performing work outside of their normal work schedule, the employee should be instructed to report this time and the supervisor should accurately record this work time on appropriate documents (including time sheets) and the employees should be appropriately compensated.*

## Telephone and Voicemail Etiquette

for  
Employees of the  
City and County  
of Honolulu



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## Message from the Mayor



Aloha. As first-line stewards of our municipal government, you are entrusted with the public's confidence.

Please be mindful that your telephone etiquette may be the first and only direct contact a person will ever have with the City. Make that first impression count. Let it say that you are knowledgeable, capable and caring.

Thank you for taking the time to review this brochure on telephone etiquette.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mufi Hannemann".

Mufi Hannemann, Mayor

## Telephone Etiquette

### Answering a Call

1. Answer all calls within three rings.
2. Appropriate greeting:  
Aloha.  
Your department or function.  
This is (your name).

• **Example:** "Aloha, Department of Planning and Permitting. This is Jane."

### Placing a Call on Hold

1. Let callers know that you are placing them on hold and wait for their response.
- **Example:** "Please hold (wait for acknowledgment from caller). Thank you."
2. Return to callers after one minute to update them on the status of their wait and ask if they would like to continue to hold or call back.

### Returning to a Call on Hold

1. Thank the caller for holding or apologize for the delay.
- **Example:** "Thank you for holding." Or, "Sorry to keep you waiting."
2. If you are unsure of the origin of a call on hold, rephrase the offer stating your name and emphasizing the word **I**.
- **Example:** "May **I** be of assistance?" Or, "May **I** help you?"
3. If you are working with a long or involved situation and feel the wait will be excessive for the second caller, or if he/she refuses to wait, offer the caller an option to call back.

• **Example:** "I'm sorry, Mr. Smith. I don't want to keep you waiting on the phone. Would you like to call back later?"

### Transferring a Call

1. Answer and greet caller (see Answering a Call).
2. Place a caller on hold (see Placing a Call on Hold).
3. Explain the situation to the person receiving your call transfer:  
Say your name.  
Say the caller's name.  
Explain the caller's purpose.

• **Example:** "Hi John. This is Jim from DPR. Mr. Smith is on the line and he has some questions about garbage pick up."

### Ending a Call

1. Say "Thank you" or "You're welcome."
2. End the conversation with "Goodbye" or "Thank you for calling." Do not say "Buh-bye" or any slang.
3. Always let the caller hang up first.

### Overall Etiquette

1. Be conscious of your volume. Speak in a pleasant and helpful manner.
2. Speak clearly.
3. Do not use internal acronyms. Please refer to all departments by their full names.
4. Use appropriate language. Swearing is never appropriate or condoned.

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of the city and county of Honolulu.

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